

(*Rev.* 10-90) NPS Form 10-900

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to Be property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable," For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property					
historic name ROCKV	VOOD				
other names/site numberVDHR t	<u>file # 0068405</u> 1				
2. Location					
street & number 12225 Chicken	Mountain Road				
not for publication N/A	_				
city or town					
vicinity X	ODANICE	code	137	7in	22057
state Virginia code VA county	ORANGE	code	13/	- Z ıh –	22957
3. State/Federal Agency Certification	1				
As the designated authority under the		ervation Act	t of 1986, as ar	nended	l. I hereby
certify that this _X_ nomination	request for determin	ation of elig	gibility meets th	ie docu	mentation
standards for registering properties in the	he National Register o	f Historic Ì	Places and meet	ts the p	rocedural and
professional requirements set forth in 3					
not meet the National Register Criteria					ant
nationally statewide _X_ locally. (See continuation	sheer for a	dditional comn	nents.)	
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Signature of certifying official	Date	7	7		
Virginia Department of Historic Res	ources	•			
State or Federal agency and bureau					
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continuation sheet for additional comm		uic I valiona	i Register Crite	114. (Dee
continuation passes for additional continu	ichus.)				
Signature of commenting or other office	ial		Date		
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or Federal agency and bureau					
4. National Park Service Certificatio	n				
I, hereby certify that this property is.	46				
entered in the National Register					
See continuation sheet.					
determined eligible for the					
National Register					
See continuation sheet.					
determined not eligible for the Nat					
removed from the National Register	er				
other (explain):					

Signatur	re of Keeper
Data of Assista	
Date of Action	
5. Classification	
Ownership of Property (Check as	many boxes as apply)
X private public-local	
public-State	
public-Federal	
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Category of Property (Check only	one box)
X building(s)	,
district	
site	
structure	
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Number of Resources within Prop	perty
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7. Description Architectural CMid-19th	lassification (Enter categories from instructions) century / GOTHIC REVIVAL
Materials (Enter	categories from instructions)
foundation_	BRICK
roof	ASPHALT SHINGLE WOOD: weatherboard
other	BRICK CHIMNEYS
Narrative Descr continuation shee	iption (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more ets.)
	Significance on the criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the onal Register listing)
A	Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B C	Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
X C	Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D	Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.
Criteria Conside	erations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)
A own	ned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B rem	oved from its original location.
C a bi	rthplace or a grave.
D ace	emetery.
E are	constructed building, object or structure.
F a co	mmemorative property.
G less	than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.
Areas of Signific	cance (Enter categories from instructions) _ARCHITECTURE
Period of Signif	icance1848
Significant Date	s1848 - construction

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
Cultural AffiliationN/A
Architect/Builder unknown
Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)
9. Major Bibliographical References Bibliography
(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)
Previous documentation on file (NPS)
preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been
remested
previously listed in the National Register
previously determined eligible by the National Register
designated a National Historic Landmark
recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # Primary Location of Additional Data
X State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
University Volt
_X_Other
Name of repository:Orange County VA Historical Society
10. Geographical Data
Acreage of Property296.5 acres
UTM References
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing
1. <u>17 747710 4232500 2. 17 748900 4233230 3. 17 749200 4233330 4. 17 749430 4232750 5. 17 748830 4232040 6. 17 748340 4232220 7. 17 748330 4231990 8. 17 748160 4231925 </u>
3. 1/ 140030 4232040 0. 1/ 140340 4232220 1. 1/ 140330 4231330 0. 1/ 140100 4231323
Verbal Boundary Description
Orange Co. VA Madison District Tax Parcel 43-96; DB 324 PG 170. The boundary is indicated on the
USGS map and is delineated by the eight UTM reference points listed in UTM REFERENCES section.
Boundary Justification
Nominated property includes the acreage historically associated with Rockwood and its original owner,
John Willis.
11. Form Prepared By
11. 1 vim 1 topacou my
name/title: Anne Brooking Stelter
Organization: date_01-08-2001
street & number:P.O. Box 237
city or town. Montrollier Station.
city or town Montpelier Station state VA zip code 22957

Additional Documentation Submit the following items with the completed	fогт
Continuation Sheets	

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO. nameMildred B. Brooking	
street & number_P.O. Box 231	telephone_540-672-4946
city or townMontpelier Station	state_VA zip code _22957

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

7. Summary Description:

See CONTINUATION sheets

8. Statement of Significance

See CONTINUATION sheets

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Summary Description

ROCKWOOD is a two-and-a-half story, frame and unpainted weatherboard dwelling set over a brick English basement. Displaying a picturesque blending of the Gothic Revival and Greek Revival styles, the house was built in 1848 and is located on a secluded, well-shaded rural hilltop in Orange County, Virginia. Its Gothic Revival influence is seen in its steeply pitched, offset cross-gable roof, piercing dormers, tall central chimneys, and an emphasis on verticality. A deep front porch and its large wood columns underset the front gable. Greek Revival influence is seen in the classic front doorway with horizontal transom and flanking sidelights, the horizontal wooden siding and wide vertical corner boards, large rectangular windows, and the simple elegance of its interior trim. The interior reflects a comfortable arrangement of spaces, including four spacious, high-ceilinged rooms on each main floor. Each room features its own fireplace and simple wood mantel. Original wood-paneled folding shutters frame the large windows. Two curving stairways lead to the upper floor from the front entry hall and rear hallway. Overall, the property remains in good condition and has undergone little alteration since its construction.

Detailed Description

Setting

ROCKWOOD stands on the crest of a knoll and faces southwesterly toward the Southwest Mountains, a range in the Piedmont region of Virginia. From a secondary road the dwelling is approached by way of a partly wood, graveled, winding half-mile lane, leading past a farm pond, fenced fields, and to the driveway encircling the house.

The 300-acre property is agricultural and consists of open-space pasture and forest adjoined by neighbors' extensive agricultural holdings, and by Montpelier, home of the fourth U.S. President James Madison. While several very old oak and ash trees shelter the house, quite a number have died and have been removed during the past 15 to 40 years. Some replacements native to the area (ash, poplar, maple, and oak) have been tended. Other landscaping within the large maintained lawn area includes well-established natives, such as walnut, holly, dogwood, and redbud, as well as hemlock, spruce, fir, pine, and magnolia trees, azaleas, nandina, and boxwood (40-50 years old) and lilac (60-65 years old) hedges. Local flagstones of varying color, shape and dimension adorn the wide front walkway and the rear entrance, and around the entire perimeter of the house.

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Basement

The English basement's brick walls encase three large rooms, one of which features a working brick fireplace. References from the early 20th century indicate the kitchen area was housed here. Prepared food was taken to the room above (now the current kitchen) by dumbwaiter and by a ladder stair through a hatch cut in the floor by the family living here then, a temporary arrangement later sealed shut. Load-bearing room partitions are 12-inch-thick brick walls. Basement rooms are used now primarily for utilitarian purposes. One room continues to have an earthen floor. The earlier kitchen floor was originally covered by planks, but is now concrete. Doors of vertical lengths of tongue-in-groove pine boards in random widths with narrow beads and secured by three wide horizontal battens separate the rooms, and are believed to be original. Prior to the 1960s, when an inside stairway from the basement to the first floor of the single-story east wing was installed, the basement was accessed only through a rear bulkhead.

Exterior

Wooden clapboards, secured with early machine-cut nails and applied directly to the evenly spaced vertical frame members, sheathe the house. The native heart pine weatherboards have a varyingly weathered, silver-grayish patina, suggesting that they were never painted. However, some evidence suggests that the house had an early, original coat of gray paint, observed in protected areas under some eaves and the upper wall of the front porch chamber. Examples of unusual early workmanship are evident. Appearing at each exterior corner is a specially fashioned dowel with square internal corner which fits vertically centered between the two wide vertical corner boards, along their entire lengths. Also, framing the three dormer windows is fluted trim with bull's-eye corner blocks which matches the interior trim of the windows and doorways.

A deep front porch features two pairs of large square recess-paneled wood columns, a pair of paneled pilasters, and simple wood balustrades of square balusters. Wide wood steps lead from the ground to the porch floor. The main entrance consists of three-paneled, tall and narrow double doors framed by a horizontal, eight-paned transom and flanking vertical sidelights, suggestive of Greek Revival influence. In the center of the gable rising above the front porch is a six-over-six-light double-hung sash window topped by a sharply peaked glass triangular head, suggestive of Gothic Revival influence. Two more windows of this design, located in the gables of the northwest and southeast sides of the house, light the attic.

Most of the house's fenestration, however, consists of large, eight-over-eight-light double-hung sash windows. The three peaked gable dormers have six-over-six-light sashes. Another

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small rectangular single-pane casement window lights a very small upstairs room. Many of the panes throughout the house are original.

In addition to the front entrance, two large exterior six-paneled doors feature space for transoms of four panes. One door is used as a rear entrance providing access to the southeastern one-story wing; its transom has been enclosed with wood. The other door is in the northwestern rear hall where daytime illumination is provided through its transom, and ventilation through its screen door. No outside steps exist at that door. However, family members of earlier occupants recall that steps once ascended to that doorway, for purposes of carrying in milk from the barn on the northwest side of the house, very early in the 20th century.

A small one-story wing topped by a hip roof projects from the southeastern side of the house. Its brick foundation (encasing an earthen-floor storage area), weatherboards, and trim all match the larger main house. This area comprises one original room and an early-20th-century screened porch. In the 1960s the porch was improved with screened windows and a concrete floor. Old weatherboard siding and trim, an old brick foundation, and replacement soapstone and brick steps are all consistent with the dwelling's original character.

In general, the condition of the exterior is average. Within recent years several holes pecked in the siding by flickers have occurred. Repair with matching old wood is continuing, as are efforts to discourage the invading birds. In the front porch area (joists, columns, railings, steps) some wood decay and brick foundation deterioration have led to recent repairs with matching compatible old wood and maximum re-use of original material, including the brick.

Roof

An offset sharply pitched cross-gable roof covering the house, and a deep front porch add much to the architectural character of ROCKWOOD. In addition to the three sharply peaked dormers, two centrally set large rectangular brick chimneys with slightly protruding shoulders rise high above the ridges of the asphalt-shingled roof. The imposingly steep roof with its wide overhang, and the height of the building perched on the hill create a vertical feeling and highly visible profile against the sky, providing among the most notable visual architectural features, particularly suggesting Gothic Revival influence.

Interior

The interior is comprised principally of eight large and spacious, almost square, high-ceilinged rooms, four on each of the two main floors. Two of these rooms, one being the

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original parlor (now a bedroom), are entered by way of the front entryway. Access to remaining sections of the dwelling is available by doorways in other sides of those rooms. The connecting doorway to the room northeast of the parlor was created sometime after original construction, probably earlier in the 20th century; its woodwork design is dissimilar. The northwest central room currently is the dining room.

The dwelling's largest room (now the living room) is entered also from the front entryway, directly in line from the front door. From this room, access to the rear section, including the one-story wing and the eastern-most room (now the kitchen) is available through an interesting high-ceilinged square cubicle featuring three doorways on three sides, all with the same simple elegant woodwork as noted throughout the dwelling. The rear hallway in the northwest gable section accesses the dining room as well as the kitchen areas. A bathroom (milk-storage room of earlier times) sits at the north end of the hallway. Original closets are evident in most rooms and under stairways.

Tall, rectangular windows throughout the house have rectangular panes. In six of the rooms a pair of bi-fold solid wood paneled interior shutters recess into the molding on each side of the windows. Windows and door trim and mantels are original and elegant in their simplicity. Windows and doors are framed with fluted trim with bull's-eye corner blocks. The mantel in the original parlor displays a series of gracefully curved, pointed arches extending across its frieze. The mantel in the kitchen has been altered (a small end portion cut away) to accommodate modern appliance installation. Other fireplaces are adorned with simple painted wood mantels, each with broad pilasters, wide friezes, and simple shelves. Hearths in upstairs rooms are laid with rectangular brownish-gray stone blocks, believed original.

Most of the four-paneled painted wood interior doors display probably original hardware, such as porcelain knobs and dark iron rimlocks. Original pine floors, well worn on the first floor, were covered with traditional oak flooring in the 1960s.

Two gracefully curving stairs lead to the upper story, one from the front entry hall and the second from the rear hallway. Each stair has a heavy turned flat newel, round handrail and plain tapering round balusters. From the second floor front landing, three more steps lead to a small, low-ceilinged room over the front porch. Here, a full attic is accessed through a medium-sized doorway. Also from the front landing, two of the four large second floor rooms are entered, one through a short hallway off which also is a tiny room--the one with the small rectangular casement window--said to have been a much earlier bathing room (before traditional indoor plumbing). The second floor rear landing provides entrance to the other two large rooms and to a bathroom and closet combination created in the early 1960s from a small room over the end of the rear hallway. A

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small curving hallway leads off the rear landing to one of the large rooms which is entered also by way of the front landing.

Second story flooring, of random width face-nailed tongue-in-groove pine boards, four to five-and-a-half inches wide, and on the stairways, all remains original.

Outbuildings (non-contributing)

Six non-contributing outbuildings complete the property. Situated on the northeastern perimeter of the lawn are one domestic/secondary structure (garage) and three agriculture/animal facilities (chicken coop and two hunting dog kennels). Farther away, down grade, north of the dwelling are one agriculture/animal facility (small barn) and one agriculture/agricultural outbuilding (large barn). All of the outbuildings are in moderately poor to poor condition. The garage and the chicken coop continue in active use for their intended functions; however, there are no dogs housed in the kennels, currently. The barns are used for agricultural purposes. Descriptions follow.

The two-bay garage is a pole structure of unpainted, weathered vertical board siding with a gable roof covered by green asphalt rolled roofing, a mid-20th-century on-site replacement of an earlier 19th-century wood garage.

The chicken coop is an unpainted vertical board-and-batten facility with metal covered shed-roof, dating from early 20th century.

A long, large dog kennel constructed of vertical wood boards, once painted, on a brick foundation, and with a gable roof covered with green asphalt shingles, dates from 1935 and housed 30 to 40 American foxhounds over a fifty-year period.

A stud-framed structure of unpainted horizontal board siding with a gable roof and green asphalt shingles was moved from near the dwelling to a site closer to the large kennel and set on a poured concrete foundation in the early 1960s. The structure had been a smokehouse of early and mid-20th century, converted to a small dog kennel until the 1980s.

An L-shaped barn of weathered vertical board siding and L-shaped gable roof covered with dark gray asphalt shingles contains four box stalls and feeding areas, constructed in later 20th century.

A very large pole barn of unpainted vertical wood siding and green metal roofing covering a gable roof is a 1960s on-site replacement of an earlier 19th-century large barn.

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Statement of Significance

ROCKWOOD, a mid-19th century private residence in Orange County, Virginia, is significant in local architecture for its distinctive and unusual design. The dwelling combines features of the picturesque rural Gothic Revival style and the more traditional Greek Revival style. Built by Colonel John Willis, great-nephew of President James Madison, probably in 1848, on land from Madison's Montpelier tract, the dwelling rises two-and-a-half stories over a brick English basement. The asymmetrical structure with sharply pitched offset cross-gable roof is unusual for houses of the period in central Virginia. The Gothic Revival influence suggests that Colonel Willis followed new architectural trends, especially those promoted by Andrew Jackson Downing, for "cottage residences" appropriately fitted to country homes.

Historical Background

In 1847 Colonel John Willis purchased over 700 acres from James Madison's Montpelier tract soon after the president's widow, Dolley Madison, sold the property. (1) The land lay between his birthplace at Woodley (also formerly Madison family land) to the southeast, and the balance of the Montpelier estate, to the northwest. Rockwood was the first of three houses built in the area for Colonel Willis and his family. The home has been in continuous use as a single dwelling and private residence since its construction in 1848.

Personal History

According to sources in William H.B. Thomas's <u>Pioneer America</u> article, John Willis was born at Woodley, in Orange County, on January 8, 1810, son of Dr. John Willis and Nelly Conway Madison, daughter of Ambrose Madison and niece of President Madison. He was raised at Woodley and attended the University of Virginia from 1826 to 1830. On July 1, 1839, he married Lucy Taliaferro Madison, a cousin, and had eight children. He was a senior officer of a militia regiment during time of active local military maneuvers.

While Colonel Willis lived at Rockwood, his mother, Nelly Conway Madison Willis, in 1850, conveyed to him additional land--several adjoining tracts totaling about 800 acres along what is now known as the Old Gordonsville Road, joining Orange and Gordonsville. Cited as a skillful farmer, likely taking advantage of the area's rich Davidson soil, Colonel Willis was also community-minded and politically active. Involved with the Orange and Alexandria Railroad during its developmental phase, he served later as a director and it finance committee chairman. The rail line reached Orange and Gordonsville in 1853 and 1854, respectively, passing through

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some of Colonel Willis's Orange-to-Gordonsville holdings. During the 1850s, he was also a member of the Virginia House of Delegates.

Willis transition from Rockwood

In 1859 Colonel Willis and his family moved from Rockwood into nearby Howard Place, which he had bought in 1856, while his architecturally unusual Italianate-style residence was under construction on that property. In 1860 he sold his Rockwood property to D.M.Bernard. The Willis family lived in his new Howard Place (known now as Mayhurst) from 1860 until 1867 when Colonel Willis, having suffered financial and other losses in the 1861-1865 Civil War, sold it and much of his extensive acreage. In 1868 the family moved into a third residence, Oakburn, which was built on some land retained nearby. (Oakburn burned about 1930.) All of Colonel Willis's homes were quite large, considered substantial and well built, and each one significantly differed from the other in design.

Willis -- the final years

Circumstances in Virginia during and after the Civil War increased personal and financial pressures on many of its citizens and Colonel John Willis suffered significant losses. Although he continued to farm at Oakburn, loans secured by that and other property in 1871 could not be repaid; in 1877 Oakburn was sold to enforce repayment. Colonel Willis no longer had property or the means to rebuild. He died on December 9, 1885, and is buried, along with his wife who had died in 1868, in the Madison family cemetery at Montpelier.

Rockwood Chain of Title

Early during the 1840s, following James Madison's death in 1836, Dolley Madison and John P. Todd, her son, conveyed at different timesover 2000 acres from the Montpelier Estate to Henry Moncure. From these acquisitions, in 1847 Henry W. and Catherine C. Moncure conveyed 713.5 acres to John Willis. (2)

Chain of title verifies that 322.5 acres at the Rockwood property passed from John and Lucy Willis in 1860 to D.M. Bernard. (3) In 1886 Rockwood was conveyed to Ann E. Bernard and John Mann. (4) In 1903 Florence Jaffrey Woodriff of New York bought Rockwood (5) and in 1905 and 1906 she sold 63.75 acres and 30.37 acres, respectively, to others. (6.7) Harry E. Sanford purchased the remaining 226.38 acres in 1920. (8) The Sanford family farmed the land and sold it in 1929 to Marion duPont Somerville. (9) In 1961 Rockwood was conveyed to L.F. Brooking and Mildred B. Brooking. (10)

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Rockwood and the duPont era

In 1929 Rockwood was purchased from Harry Sanford by Marion duPont Somerville, daughter of William duPont who had acquired Montpelier in the early 1900s when she was a young girl. At her father's death, daughter Marion inherited Montpelier in 1928. She began to acquire additional properties adjoining the Montpelier tract. This included most of the original Rockwood tract which had been part of Montpelier prior to Colonel Willis's purchase in 1847.

Marion duPont Somerville married Randolph Scott, movie actor, in early 1930s, and though they were later divorced, she continued to use his name.

In 1961 Marion duPont Scott conveyed the Rockwood property, at 318.10 acres, to Linwood Fitzhugh Brooking and his wife, Mildred Benton Brooking. Earlier, in 1935 the Brookings had begun residing at Rockwood after Mrs. Scott repaired and upgraded the house with new roofing to replace the old wood shingles, and installed electrical and plumbing systems. Mr. Brooking, at that earlier time, served as Mrs. Scott's huntsman and kept the Montpelier Hunt's foxhound kennels for her at Rockwood.

The land retained its farm status through the years of Mrs. Scott's and the Brooking's ownership. Various grain crops and hay were raised at Rockwood for Montpelier estate's use, and later for the Brooking's use. Some land provided pasture for several Montpelier connected horses, and later for Mr. Brooking's cattle. This acreage, about half wooded and half pasture/crop, as it adjoined Montpelier, provided also for Mrs. Scott and the Montpelier Hunt a territory for fox-hunting during the 1930s into the 1970s when the increasing deer population precluded successful fox-hunting. Mr. Brooking continued to serve as the Montpelier huntsman. In addition, in 1950 he was named farm manager for the Montpelier estate, a role he continued until Mrs. Scott's death in 1983, and briefly during the transition years of Montpelier's ownership and management by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Mr. Brooking died in 1999 and Rockwood continues to be the home of his wife, Mildred B. Brooking.

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End Notes

- Biographical information and historical data are provided primarily from William H.B. Thomas's article, "The Full Tide of Prosperity" published in <u>Pioneer</u> <u>America</u> 1, January 1969, pp. 40-45.
- 2. Orange County, VA. Deed Book 40, pg. 447.
- 3. Orange County, VA. Deed Book 45, pg. 239.
- 4. Orange County, VA. Deed Book 52, pg. 367.
- 5. Orange County, VA. Deed Book 62, pg. 42.
- 6. Orange County, VA. Deed Book 63, pg.482.
- 7. Orange County, VA. Deed Book 64, pg.35.
- 8. Orange County, VA. Deed Book 83, pg. 108.
- 9. Orange County, VA. Deed Book 99, pg. 291.
- 10. Orange County, VA. Deed Book 192, pg. 494.

Acknowledgments

Linwood F. Brooking and W.W.Sanford, Jr., and others to a lesser extent, who had lived at Rockwood, or had connections with with earlier residents, provided comprehensive oral history, in statements over many years, based on their personal knowledge of Rockwood for most of the twentieth century.

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- Downing, Andrew Jackson. <u>Victorian Cottage Residences</u>, reprint 1873 ed. New York: Dover Publications, 1981.
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